Madrasat Ahlul'Bait Islamic School

Grade 5 Akhlaq

Grade 5 : A Story of Akhlaq
Salam alaikum Abdul. Thanks for coming.
Thank you for inviting me! I appreciate the good food. Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim
Thank you Allah for making it possible for me to feed the needy.
Thank you son!
Mom, let me help you clean up while Abdul washes his hands.
Abdul, I would love for you to take some food for your mom.
Thank you very much!

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Shia-Muslim Association of Bay Area

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents 3
Foreword 4
Preface 4
Chapter 1: Merits of Akhlaq 5
1.1 Worksheet: Merits of Akhlaq 6
Chapter 2: Manners of Eating 9
2.1 Manners of Drinking 11
2.2 Worksheet: Manners of Eating and Drinking 12
Chapter 3: Controlling the Tongue (Manners of Talking) 14
3.1 Abusive Language, Insults, Sarcasm and Impertinence 15
3.2 Impertinence: 16
3.3 Worksheet: Controlling the Tongue 17
Chapter 4: Dress Code 20
4.1 Why should People Care about the Way that They Dress? 21
4.2 Worksheet: Dress Code 22
Chapter 5: Deeds Which Invite Blessings 23
5.1 Deeds Which Invite Blessings 25
Chapter 6: Deeds that Invite Misfortune 27
6.1 Worksheet: Deeds that Invite Misfortune 29
Chapter 7: Good Intentions 31
7.1 Worksheet: Good Intentions 33
Chapter 8: Ikhlaas (sincerity) 35
8.1 Why is it difficult to be sincere? 35
8.2 Worksheet: Ikhlaas (sincerity) 38
Chapter 9: To Swallow Anger, to Forgive Others 40
9.1 Worksheet: To Forgive Others 42
Chapter 10: Patience 44
10.1 Worksheet: Patience 47
Chapter 11: Hard Work 49
11.1 Worksheet: Hard Work 50
Chapter 12: Jealousy / Envy 51
12.1 Worksheet: Jealousy/Envy 54
Chapter 13: Mockery 56
13.1 Worksheet: Mockery 57
Chapter 14: Fault-finding 59
14.1 What is Fault-finding? 59
14.2 What are the Effects of Fault-finding? 59
14.3 What are the Consequences of Fault-finding? 60
14.4 What are the Cures to Prevent Us from Fault-finding? 60
14.5 Worksheet: Fault-Finding 62
Chapter 15: Gheebat (Backbiting) 63
15.1 Worksheet: Gheebat 66
Chapter 16: Consideration of Under-privileged People 68
16.1 Worksheet: Consideration of Under-privileged People 70
Chapter 17: Rights of Relatives 72
17.1 Worksheet: Rights of Relatives 74
Chapter 18: Respect and Rights of Neighbors 76
18.1 Worksheet: Rights of Neighbors 78
Acknowledgements 80

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In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious Most Merciful

Foreword

The material presented in this document is a result of an effort made by the personnel of the school of Ahlul'Bait of the Shia-Muslim Association of Bay Area Islamic Center at San Jose, California in cooperation with several schools of Ahlul'Bait at London-Stanmore, London-Hujjat, Vancouver, Minnesota and Toronto.

We, at San Jose, looked at material from London-Stanmore, London-Hujjat, Vancouver, Minnesota, Toronto and Irvine's Islamic institutions, as well as that available at various web-sites to compile age appropriate textbooks for use by our students. We thank the institutions that were kind enough to provide us with the electronic files of their curriculum. We used some of what they had and added to it what we felt was appropriate. We included more worksheets and pictures where deemed necessary. We also added some new topics that, we felt are important to the students.

We had two important goals in mind while working on this document. First, introduce the students to the important Islamic concepts and beliefs that are crucial for him/her to know. Second, expose the students to as many Quranic verses and sayings from Prophet Muhammad (p) and his Ahlul'Bait (a) as possible.

We thank Hujjatul Islam Maulana Nabi Raza Abidi for his spiritual guidance. We hope future efforts will continue taking place until reaching our goal of having a strong, rich and unified curriculum for the schools of Ahlul'Bait for all ages.

Syllabus Committee
Madrasat Ahlul'Bait

Preface

In this book, students are introduced to additional aspects of good behavior and mannerisms. They are to learn of several etiquettes taught by Islam to further enhance the nobility of our character. The student should learn to exhibit these etiquettes in dealings with all, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Demonstrating good akhlaq is the ideal way to introduce people to the teachings of Islam. There are therefore a variety of topics considered under this title and continue in later books too.

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Chapter 1: Merits of Akhlaq

Akhlaq means BEHAVIOR or CONDUCT. To have good Akhlaq is very important but at the same time it is very difficult. Prophet Muhammad (S) has explained:

> *"I have been sent to complete the nobility of your character."*

This means that out of all the tasks which Allah sent the Prophet (S) to us for, one of the most important was to teach us perfect Akhlaq.

To gain the best Akhlaq can be compared to climbing out of a deep, dark cave. Imagine trying to climb out from a cave as deep as the world. In the cave, our eyes are useless, we cannot see anything. We have to feel our way with our hands. As we climb higher, we begin to see the light, and our eyes start to open. In the same way, when we try to improve our character, we take one step at a time, higher and higher. The higher we get the closer we get to the light of Allah, and the better our Akhlaq becomes.

Once we get out of the cave, we are surrounded by light and we can see for miles and miles. We can see the sky and the sun. When we reach the top of our character, our soul is surrounded by Allah's light, and it can see through all the darkness that the world tries to attract us with. It can see the path towards Allah. It is hard work to reach that stage, but it is one of the tests in life, and the only way that we will become true followers of the Prophet (S).

In Surah an-Nur ayat 35 and 36, Allah explains

> ***I am the Light of Heaven and Earth and I shall guide those whom I wish. This light is found in those houses where Allah's praise is offered day and night. The people of these houses are such that nothing tears them away from the remembrance of Allah and it is these people whom Allah will guide onto the right path.***

Light is there to guide us in the dark. What Allah is explaining to us is that He will guide us with His light, and will help us to climb out of the cave.

How can we improve our Akhlaq? We can improve our Akhlaq by trying to be good at all times, whether this is at home, or in the Mosque, at school or with our friends. Whenever we do something wrong we should ask Allah for forgiveness. We must also try our best not to repeat the same mistake again.

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1.1 Worksheet: Merits of Akhlaq

1. In your own opinion what is good akhlaq? Use your own words to explain. Give *specific* examples of how you can practise good akhlaq in your life.

2. When you portray good akhlaq how do you help the image of Islam?

3. What did the Prophet (s) say he was sent for?

4. In today's culture, especially on television it is 'cool' to be rude. Think of an example where you can be 'cool' but still within the rules of good akhlaq.

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5. Zain and Fatima are siblings. They have excellent akhlaq with their friends, family and people around them. They both help their parents, Sara and Hussein Rizvi, on the weekends at their family restaurant “Kabob Café” in Fremont. An old lady, Zinat, comes to the Restaurant every weekend because the children are always nice to her and helpful, and give her excellent customer service. Zinat, is elderly and she has no family in the U.S. Zinat has been coming to the café for the last 2 years because she feels like the children are like her family. Their parents also have very good Akhlaq. She has become very close to them. She even brings them home baked cookies or candy every weekend. Many customers at the “Kabob Café” have been coming there for years because of the good Akhlaq of the Rizvi family. What does this teach you about the benefits of good Akhlaq?

6. The closer we get to Allah, to the “light of Allah,” the better our akhlaq becomes.

   TRUE FALSE

7. Below are Ayats 35 and 36 from Surah Al Nur in the Qur’an. What does this Ayat mean?

“ I am the Light of Heaven and Earth and I shall guide those whom I wish. This light is found in those houses where Allah's praise is offered day and night. The people of these houses are such that nothing tears them away from the remembrance of Allah and it is these people whom Allah will guide onto the right path”

8. We should always be polite and respectful to our parents, elders, friends, neighbors and people around us if we are to please Allah and follow the actions of the Holy Prophet (s)

   TRUE FALSE

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9. Aliyah has a heart of gold. She is always helpful to others and is kind. However, she is known to have very hot temper around her friends and family. When she gets angry with her younger brother, Ali, she starts yelling and in the course of doing so ends up saying so many things that she does not mean. Once her temper cools off, she realizes what she has done and it is too late because she has already hurt her brother's feelings. Ali is beginning to loose his respect for Aliyah because of the way she yells at him. What are the consequences of Aliyah's behavior when she let's her anger take charge of her emotions and resorts to bad akhlaq? How should we behave when we are upset with others or find ourselves in a similar situation?

10. When Amina joined San Jose Elementary School her classmates thought she was weird because she wore Hijab to school and was the only Muslim girl in her grade. Kids were mean to her and avoided talking to her. As time passed by all the kids got to know Amina for what she really was, a kind, and compassionate, funny, intelligent and helpful girl. She even helped the girls that made fun of her in class. She is now the President of the 5th grade Students Council and is actually very well liked. People respect her for her beliefs and do not judge her anymore for being different. She has won all her friends over through her "Actions" and not her "Words". What does this teach you about the importance of good akhlaq?

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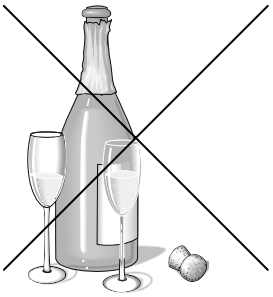
Chapter 2: Manners of Eating

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:
Eat of the good things with which We have provided you, and give thanks to Allah."

So, before you sit down to eat, you must make sure that the food is "of the good things", that is, it is HALAAL.

Never eat in a place where there is Alcohol.



Always wash your hands
Before you start eating

Before you start to eat say:

BISMILLAHIR RAHMAN NIR RAHIM

Take a pinch of salt before starting to eat

Always eat with your right hand, and take small bites and chew the food.

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Never talk with your mouth full or look at other people's faces or plate while eating.

Don't eat hot food or blow on it, and always finish all the food on your plate.

Do not over eat. Always put a little food on your plate and add more if you are still hungry.

Only get up from the table when you have finished you food.

Before getting up, take another pinch of salt and say: **ALHAMDULILLAH**

Finally, rinse your mouth, wash your hands and dry then with a towel.

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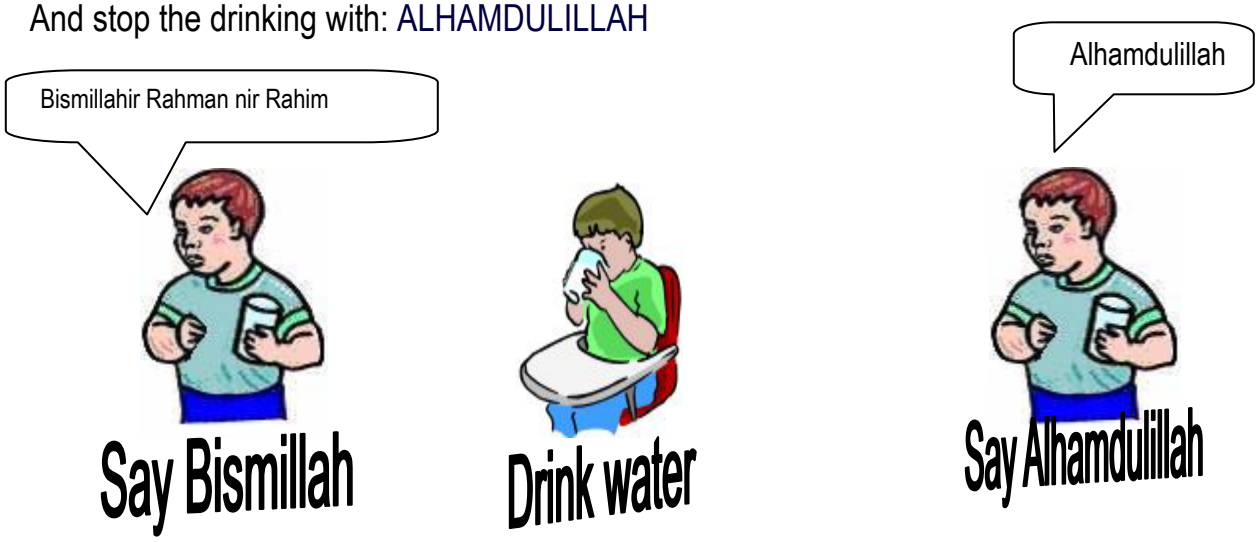
2.1 Manners of Drinking

When drinking do not gulp it down at once, but sip it in three parts, starting with:
BISMILLAHIR RAHMAN NIR RAHIM
And stop the drinking with: ALHAMDULILLAH



Do this three times

When drinking water remember Imam Hussein (a), his family, and their thirst in Kerbala.
When you finished drinking, ask Allah to send His blessings on Imam Hussein (a), his family and companions, and curse on his murderers and enemies.

- Try not to drink from a glass that has a crack. If you do, do not drink from the side that has the crack.
- During the day drink standing up and at night drink sitting down.
- Do not drink too much.

Nothing is better to drink than water. All creatures of Allah drink water to survive. .Allah says in the Holy Qur'an in Suratul Anbiya, Verse 30:

"We made every living thing from water."

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2.2 Worksheet: Manners of Eating and Drinking

Fill in the blanks using the pictures below (you may use a word twice):

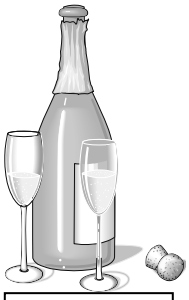
1. Before you start eating you should _____ your hands.
2. You should never sit at a table which has _____ on it.
3. Before you start eating you should take a pinch of _____.
4. You should wait for food to _____ .
5. You should not eat _____ food.

Salt

Right

Dry

Wash



Alcohol

Cool down

Look

Too much

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6. You should never _____ at others people's food when eating.

7. You should always eat with your _____ hand.

8. When you have finished you should _____ and _____ your hands.

Short Answers:

9. What are the three things one should remember when drinking water?

a.

b.

c.

10. What does the Qur'an say about water?

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Chapter 3: Controlling the Tongue (Manners of Talking)

People may look at you and decide what kind of person you are by the way you are dressed, but their final and lasting feeling about you will be on what you say.

Think before you speak.

Imam Hussein (a) has said that:

You should never begin a conversation without first saying Salaam to the person.

Prophet Isa (A) has said that you should think of your words like gold and find the right time to say what need be, as you would find the right thing to spend your gold on.

When speaking:

- Always say what is **useful**, what is **truthful** and what is **not harmful** to anyone.
- Never, say hurtful things or back-bite about anyone, do not even listen to others doing it.
- Never, hurt anyone's feelings even jokingly.
- Never, use bad language.
- If you are not sure whether you should say something or not, then it is better to keep quiet.

Think before you speak, and imagine if our 12th Imam (a) is standing next to you, would you still say what you are going to say.

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3.1 Abusive Language, Insults, Sarcasm and Impertinence

To use abusive language means to swear or insult someone. This is so obviously wrong, but surprisingly it is a common habit especially amongst the youth.

Most people swear when something bad happens to them, or when someone does something that they don't like. These people say that the actual swearing helps them to control their anger, and stops them from doing other things which might be even worse.

This argument is logical, but Islam rejects it because a person who cannot restrain his anger, without using foul language must have very weak will power. The noblest person according to Islamic etiquette (akhlaq) is that person who can control his anger, and even manage to look happy.

To use swearing as a means of insulting someone is unjustified under any circumstances. Islam teaches us NEVER TO INSULT. If someone has wronged us, we should either take action, or tell them that we do not like what they say; but to insult them is to stoop to a very low stage, and Islam does not accept that a person should become so undignified.

To be sarcastic to others, and tease them also shows that part of a person's character is faulty. It may only feel like a joke, but think for a moment how *you* would feel if you were the one being teased.

Below are a few saying of Imam Ali (a) about the danger of the tongue. Look over them, and think about their meaning.

- *"Nothing else needs to be restrained and kept under control but the tongue".*
- *"Whosoever desires to remain safe should guard against what comes out of his tongue".*
- *"Take care of your tongue".*
- *"Woe be upon you! Will people be with their noses prostrated in hell fire except for reasons of what they had reaped out of (misuse) of their tongues".*
- *"The one from whose tongue people are afraid of is from the inmates of hell fire".*
- *"Salvation of the believer lies in guarding his tongue.*

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3.2 Impertinence:

This means to give disrespectful answers to people who are talking to you.
If someone is talking to you, whether he is telling you off or not, you should never be rude in your replies. If you are innocent then explain yourself, but to answer back to a parent or a teacher in such a manner is an inexcusable example of bad akhlaq.

> Impertinence just proves that you have a poor character. It may make you feel smart for a while, but at the end of the day, you will have lost all your respect in front of your elders.

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3.3 Worksheet: Controlling the Tongue

1. As we grow older all of us feel we can talk back and give smart responses to our parents or teachers. What does Islam say about this?

2. Name three things that we should be careful of when speaking:

   a.

   b.

   c.

3. Give two examples of how or when *you* can control *your* tongue.

   a.

   b.

4. Imam Hussein (a) has suggested the first thing we should say when we speak to someone is _____.

5. If one are not sure about the effect of what they are going to say it is better to remain _____.

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6. Hijab and Samantha are good friends and hang around together in school. They eat lunch together everyday and walk back to the bus together. One day Samantha and Hijab fall into a misunderstanding. Jahara is jealous of their friendship and lies to Hijab that Samantha was saying things about her behind her back. Hijab does not even think of asking Samantha first, she just charges at Samantha, looses control, and starts yelling at her and calls her names. Samantha is dumbfounded and cannot believe that Hijab is acting the way she is. Samantha walks away and tells Hijab that she is under some misunderstanding. If you were Hijab, what would have been the right way to deal with this situation as a Muslim?

7. Zahra is upset with her parents because they did not allow her to spend the night at Emile's house. Zahra's parents have a good reason to not let her spend the night. Zahra's mom calls Zahra downstairs to help her by laying the table for dinner but Zahra refuses. When Zahra's mom comes upstairs to talk to her and explain to her that mothers always have their daughter's best interests at heart and that she loves her, Zahra gets abusive and disrespectful. Why is Zahra's behaviour unacceptable in Islam? What are the consequences of such disrespect?

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8. Prophet Isa (A) has said that we should think of your words “like gold and find the right time to say” what we need to say just as we would find the right thing to spend our gold on. It is always important therefore to think before we speak.

TRUE FALSE

9. Every action that we perform has a consequence. What are the consequences of being disrespectful and not controlling your tongue? Think of 3 consequences and write them down below

10. Zena and Fatima are good friends since Kindergarten. Zena and Fatima apparently had a disagreement that could have easily been fixed if they both sat down and talked about their problem as good 5th graders should. Zena instead chooses to call Fatima and starts saying all sorts of bad things to her on the phone without even putting much thought into what she was saying. Fatima gets offended and promises herself to never talk to Zena again. What were the consequences of Zena’s actions? What lesson do you think we can learn from this about controlling our tongue?

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Chapter 4: Dress Code

Indecent dressing means to have a form of dress which is disrespectful, i.e. which reveals the shape of the body in such a way as to attract attention from others.

Whether the garment is loose or tight; see-through or dark; or any other combination; if it reveals part of or all of the shape of the body, then according to Islamic standards, it is classified as indecent.

If someone wears clothes which are revealing, it becomes necessary for those who are present to cast down their gaze, so they should not look directly at the person.

> ***"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and God is well acquainted with all that they do. [Surah 24 ayat 30]***
>
> ***And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over themselves and not display their beauty except to their husbands..."*** **[Surah 24 ayat 31]**
>
> ***Oh children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness --- that is the best" [Al-A'raf 7:26].***

The address in this last ayat is to all humanity, emphasizing thereby the universal human need to cover ourselves properly. We cover our bodies and dress modestly to show our soul not our body.

Our dress should provide adornment. It should provide for decent appearance. Our appearance should not be an eyesore for decent human beings. Dressing indecently invites disrespect.

For men, this extends the coverage requirements to include most of the body. A male should not wear tight or revealing clothing either, and should wear a beard so that he is easily distinguished from a female. He should also not dress like women nor wear their clothes.

For women, the essential requirement is that their dress should identify them as respectable ladies who would be honored not harassed. Islam helps to secure a female's modesty by

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preserving her beauty with Hijab. This way when a person talks with or looks at a lady, **he sees her ideas and thoughts** rather then just her attractiveness. Hijab rules also aim at protecting women from the gaze of non-mahram men.

Our dress should establish our Islamic identity. At the least it should not identify us as followers of another religion. Additionally, it should positively identify us as Muslims.

Poor people may not be able to afford dressing expensively. Dressing simply causes people to identify simplicity as a life style and promotes equality amongst rich and poor. So Islam also encourages us to dress simply.

4.1 Why should People Care about the Way that They Dress?

People wear clothes for many reasons besides just covering themselves. Some reasons are as follows:

a) To cover themselves
b) For comfort
c) For protection against cold, wind, rain, etc.
d) To look and feel good

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4.2 Worksheet: Dress Code

Choose the correct answer:

1. One should wear only name brand expensive clothes…
    a. Sometimes, if you can truly afford it
    b. Always, even if you cannot afford it
    c. Once in a life-time
    d. Never

2. If it is in style to wear skin tight clothes that reveal your figure;
    a. Everyone should wear tight clothes
    b. It is o.k. to wear these for women in WOMEN-ONLY gatherings
    c. You should wear them everywhere so you don't stand out as being out of fashion
    d. You should never wear them

3. It is important for a Muslim to wear …
    a. Clean and decent clothing
    b. Torn clothes, so you don't look rich
    c. Fashionable clothes
    d. Clothes that you like, no matter how it looks

4. People that dress indecently are doing everything BUT the following:
    a. Displeasing Allah
    b. Submitting to the will of Allah
    c. Encouraging evils of society
    d. Causing our Imams to be sad

5. People who dress decently and cover themselves well:
    a. Look respectful
    b. Are submitting to the will of Allah
    c. Please our Imams
    d. All of the above

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Chapter 5: Deeds Which Invite Blessings

Allah says in Surah al-Baqarah, Ayat 277:

> ***Those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and establish regular prayers and regular charity, will have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.***

There are many deeds which, if done regularly make Allah pleased with the person who has done them.

We should do good deeds because other people benefit from us. By being good we are obeying Allah and pleasing Him. Also we will have a good feeling by helping others.

Some of these are listed below:

1) Waking up early in the morning for Salatul Shab, and Salatul Fajr.

   51:15 ***As to the Righteous, they will be in the midst of Gardens and Springs,***
   51:16 ***Taking joy in the things which their Lord gives them, because, before then, they lived a good life.***
   51:17 ***They were in the habit of sleeping but little by night,***
   51:18 ***And in the hours of early dawn, They (were found) praying for Forgiveness;***

2) When you wake up in the morning, say Salamun Alaykum to your parents and ask them if there is anything you can do for them.

3) Reciting Qur'an in the morning before going to school or work. Prophet Muhammad (S) has said:

   "The best among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it to others."

   He has also said:
   *"Let **light shine** in your house with the recitation from Qur'an, and do not turn your homes into dark vaults. For when Qur'an is frequently read in a house, the blessings of*

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Allah descend, and those of the house live a life of ease and happiness, and the house shines in the sight of the heavenly creatures, the same way as the stars shine for the creatures on earth."

4) Giving help to those in need. **Everybody** gets help from Allah. Allah likes those people more who are kind to others and try hard to help them.

5) Giving to the poor. Allah has given you your wealth. You should be thankful to Him by giving it to others who need it.

6) To pray Salaat **ON TIME**. Our 6th Imam (A) has said:

"Whoever does not pray on time is not of us."

7) To tell the truth at all times. Prophet Muhammad (S) has said:

"Leave falsehood and make speaking the truth a habit."

We are also told that lying is the mother of all evils, since when you lie; you will start to do other bad things as well.

8) To be a host (have a guest in the house). Prophet Muhammad (S) has said:
"When Allah wishes to do good to a family, He sends a gift to it. The gift is a guest who brings the sustenance of Allah with him and washes away the sins of the family when he leaves."

This does not mean that the sins of the family will disappear! It means that the guest gives a chance to the family to be good and hospitable. If the family is a good host, Allah will be pleased with them, and with His mercy forgive them of their sins.

9) To wash your hands before **and** after meals.

10) To be in a state of taharat (clean). Always perform wudhu before sleeping, eating, praying Qur'an, or offering Salaat.

11) To say Salaat e Jamaat. Prophet Muhammad (S) has said that if you have already offered your Salaat, and you come to a mosque where Salaat is being recited in Jamaat, you **should** offer your prayers again to please Allah.

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5.1 Deeds Which Invite Blessings

1. Write down three deeds you can do to invite happiness (do not use the ones mentioned below)
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____

2. How can you always or almost always be in a state of taharat?

---

3. What did Prophet Mohammad (AS) say was one way of having Allah forgive our sins?

---

4. You have had a full dinner and go to visit a friend afterwards. They have just ordered cheese pizza, your favorite. Your tummy is full but the pizza looks great! What should/could you do?

---

5. What usually makes you sulk? How can you prevent yourself from it?

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6. Do you know a stubborn person? How does this person make you feel with their behavior? If you don't, think of an example of how a stubborn person would act and could make others feel?

---

7. Who are you rude to most (brother/sister/etc.)? How can you improve yourself?

---

8. Your classmate made a mistake and your whole class laughed at him. What should you do? How would you feel if you were the one being laughed at?

---

9. What was the deed (in one word) that Shaytan was guilty of?

---

10. It is sometimes very easy to lie to get out of trouble! How can you stop yourself from telling a lie?

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Chapter 6: Deeds that Invite Misfortune

We all have done deeds that invite happiness, but there are also deeds, which are bad, and if you do them, they will lead to unhappiness.

Allah has made certain deeds wrong because either they are bad for us, i.e. our health, or they hurt or harm other people.

Some of these deeds are as follows:

1) Missing to say your prayers on time without a good reason: If you are watching your favourite football match (e.g. the FA cup between Manchester United and Crystal Palace), and it is time for Salaat, you should go to pray first, and then come back to watch the rest of the match.

   Our 6th Imam (a) has said:

   "Whoever does not pray on time is not of us."

2) Eating when you are already full: This is bad because you spoil your appetite, as well as making yourself overweight and you are putting extra pressure on your body to look after the extra weight. You also loose respect for food.

3) Sulking: This means to make a face when you do not get what you want. This is bad because you are being a spoilsport. If your parents refuse you something, they are only doing it for your own good.

4) Being stubborn: This means that you think only you are right and that everybody else is wrong and refuse to hear anyone else. You should listen to others and think about what they are saying before you decide what is right and wrong.

5) Sleeping more than is required: If you sleep too much, then this is bad for you. The more you sleep, the more tired you get. This means that if you become lazy and lay in bed for longer than you need, then you will become even lazier. Time is very precious, and Allah has given it to you to spend usefully. Try not to waste it.

6) To tell lies: Lying is very bad, and can become a habit very easily. Lying is also like a key, which opens the door to other bad deeds. Prophet Muhammad (s) has said:

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"Leave falsehood and make speaking the truth a habit."

7) Being rude to others: This is bad because you not only hurt other people's feelings, also you will lose your self-respect and you friends if you make a habit of being rude.

8) To think that you are better then others: This is one of the worst deeds, because this is pride. That is why Shaytan, was removed from the mercy of Allah, because he thought, he was better than Prophet Adam (A). How can you avoid pride and arrogance? However good you are or however well you do, just remember Allah; tell yourself that He is the One who has helped you achieve your success and thank Him, and you will stop yourself from becoming arrogant.

9) To laugh at other people's mistakes: This is rude as well as being proud. Everybody is human, and everybody makes mistakes. To laugh at other people is bad because you can hurt their feelings. Just think, how would you like it if other people laughed at you?

10) To be in a state of Najasat (unclean): You should always try to remain clean and tahir. This means that you should wash yourself properly every time you go to the toilet, and make sure that your clothes do not get Najis. If they do, then you should clean them as soon as you come home. It is said that to be clean and tahir is from the habits of the prophets.

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6.1 Worksheet: Deeds that Invite Misfortune

1. Why has Allah made certain deeds wrong?

2. How can you avoid being arrogant?

3. Why do you think over-sleeping is bad?

4. Why did Iblis, an angel, become Shaytan whose mission is to whisper evil thoughts to us and lead us astray?

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5. Suppose lying will save you from your teacher's punishment (your parents will be unaware of your wrong deed in school too). Why do you think you should still tell the truth and face the consequences of your deed?

Fill in the blanks:

6. You should always remain clean and _____.

7. Being _____ means that, you think only you are right and that everybody else is wrong.

8. _____ means to make a face when you do not get what you want.

9. Our _____ has said: "Whoever does not pray on time is not of us"

10. To laugh at other people's mistakes is bad because you can _____.

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Chapter 7: Good Intentions

It is necessary for us to understand that anything that is not done purely for Allah and without sincerity gives no benefit to man. Rather, it is harmful for the hereafter. Imam Sadiq (a) says:

Anyone who aims at getting worldly gains from knowledge has no share in the Hereafter and one who intends to earn in the Aakhirat gets both; worldly and otherworldly benefits from Allah.

Even while fasting, if a person definitively intends to break the fast, then the fast becomes void although the person might not actually eat or drink anything, because the intention was not sincere. Allah is All-knowing, All-hearing. Nothing is concealed from Him. He knows even the hidden secrets of our hearts. He is well aware of our intention, He knows the real motives d all our actions. We can deceive a man but can never deceive Him. If we perform a deed only to carry out His order, seeking solely His Pleasure, He will accept it, and grant the promised reward, but if the real incentive of the deed is some worldly gain, He will reject it, be it even a prayer.

Amirul Mo-mineen (a) says: *All the deeds are hypocrisy except that which is done with a purity of intention.*

The Holy Prophet (s) says: *Deeds of man are mortgaged by his intention and everyone gets what he intends. If anybody fights for the Cause of Allah, his reward is with Allah and if one wages a war for worldly gain, his reward remains limited only to this world*.

Prophet Muhammad (s) once narrated that three people died and were brought before Allah. One person was a Qari (a recitor of the Holy Qur'an); the other a great warrior who fought bravely and was martyred in the way of Allah; and the third used to give abundantly of his wealth in charity. In each case, Allah asked them what they did, and they recounted their respective deeds, adding that they did this for the sake of Allah. However Allah was aware that the Qari recited the Qur'an more for the praise he heard of himself; similarly the martyr fought in a Holy war only to be called hero by others; and the rich man donated to charity in order to be called a generous man. All three of these people therefore did not have pure intentions and did not deserve any reward form Allah.

So suppose you tell a friend to stop cheating or being mean to other friends and your friend gets mad at you. Do you think you did something wrong? No, not if your intention was to help your friend do something right and refrain from wrong. However if your intention was to

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embarrass your friend in front of others; or to make others think how great *you* are then you did do something wrong. And just like you know it in your heart so does Allah.

So, in all the good that we do, let us be sure that our intentions are for the right purpose only, and in any sinful actions, let us be fearful of Allah and sincerely remorseful.

Imam Sadiq (a) said: *Allah will gather people on the Day of Judgment according to their intentions.*

If the action lacks sincerity however dignified or pious it may be, it will not fetch any reward from Allah. In every circumstance, doing one's duty in the path of Allah with purity of intention raises one to a great status. Nobody can say that this is not possible for me because, when one starts walking on the way of Allah, one's strength increases and one's difficulties are resolved.

As the Holy Quran says:

And as for those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them in Our ways; and Allah is most surely with the doers of good.

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7.1 Worksheet: Good Intentions

1. Write down two ahadith about the importance of good intentions in our deeds.

2. What does a person have to do if he wants his intentions for his deeds to be good?

3. Name an example of when you did something good with purest of intentions. If you cannot think of one, make up one that you could possibly do.

4. Shaytan had prayed to Allah so many times. What was the intention of his action that made him so bad? After all, he had just refused to bow down in front of Adam (s), not Allah.

5. If I give away only $100 to help someone in need and a rich person gives $1000 whose donation do you think will be accepted by Allah and why?

Fill in the blanks:

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6. The rewards we get are for our good _____.

7. A Qari is a recitor of the Holy _____.

8. A martyr is a Muslim who dies in the way of _____.

9. In all sinful action let us be _____ of Allah.

10 In every circumstance, doing one's duty in the path of Allah with purity of intention raises one to a _____.

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Chapter 8: Ikhlaas (sincerity)

This means to be sincere and honest in all respects.

Sincerity means to really mean something when you say it, to really feel for something with your heart.

We should be sincere in all our actions. Although this all sounds very easy it is one of the most difficult tasks ever set before us. Ask yourself, for instance *"How sincere am I when I offer my prayers?"*

8.1 Why is it difficult to be sincere?

Allah created man and give him a balance. In a universe where everything has an opposite, light and dark, good and bad, Allah gave man ***FURQAN,*** the ability to judge between the opposites.

To enable us to use our judging ability, Allah created that facet of our nafs that is receptive to the voice of Shaytan. It is in our innermost hearts and whispers evil thoughts into our mind. In Qur'an, Surah 114, Ayat 4 and 5, we ask Allah for protection from this whisperer, from the thoughts which it tries to implant into our minds. This is what we are fighting against.

Shaytan asked Allah to give him freedom until the day of Judgement. Allah granted him that freedom. Shaytan has made it his duty to guide human beings away from Allah.

Surah 15 Ayat 36 onwards,

(Iblis) said: "O my Lord! Give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are raised."
(God) said: "Respite is granted to you--
"Till the Day of the Time Appointed."
(Iblis) said: "O my Lord! Because You have put me in the wrong, I will make (wrong) fair-seeming to them on the earth, and I will put them all in the wrong--

"Except Your servants among them, SINCERE and purified (by Your grace)."

(God) said: "This (Way of My SINCERE servants) is indeed a Way that leads straight to Me.

"For over My servants no authority shall you have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow you."

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And verily, Hell is the promised abode for them all!

And therefore Shaytan waits for us. His voice starts whispering, praising us, and telling us how great we are. If we are not aware, our niyyat changes, and we lose all our sincerity.

When we pray in public, our niyyat is under attack by this same voice. It tells you to pray correctly, just to show others what a pious person you are.

Salaat should be truly sincere. We should not try to hurry our prayers in the morning so that we can climb back into our beds after all we are thanking the One who gave us life. If you put your hand on your chest, you will feel your heart beat and remember the force that caused it into motion. This is the force that we worship.

Allah says in Hadith e Qudsi ***"I was a hidden treasure, and I wanted to be discovered, therefore I created."***

A treasure is something we benefit from, whether it is knowledge, wealth, etc. Allah is a hidden treasure, but He has left us plenty of clues (signs) to how He can be discovered. Qur'an is full of advice about the signs of Allah, of how we can reach him. The secret of finding the path is to keep your niyyat sincere, to make your every action honest and for the pleasure of Allah.

This will work both ways, because Allah has told us that when we remember Him, He will also remember us. Surah 2 Ayat 152

Then you do remember Me; I will remember you.

By being sincere in our actions we will receive an inner strength from Allah, a way of looking at things superior to the gaze blinded by worldly goods. We will find more of a purpose in our life, and a contentment and harmony where we will find ourselves at peace with everything around us.

Once we overcome the whisper, then our ears will only receive true guidance. It takes a little bit of effort, but the rewards are beyond imagination.

Following are some of the sayings of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (a):

- *Blessed is the one whose actions, knowledge, kindness, revenge, taking and not taking things, speaking and not speaking all stem from his sincerity for Allah. [Mizan al-Hikmat, v.3, pp.56-58]*
- *Sincerity is the most honorable ending*
- Freedom is found in sincerity. [Ibid]

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- *Sincerity is the support for the worship of Allah. [Ibid]*
- *The one whose goal is other than God has been ruined. [Ibid]*

Sayings of the Prophet (s):

- *Blessed are the sincere ones. They are the lights on the path of guidance and are free from any wickedness. [Mizan al-Hikmat, v.3, pp.59-62]*
- *Do all your actions out of sincerity for God. God will not accept those actions except the ones done out of sincerity for Him. [Ibid]*
- *Sincerity means to avoid all divinely forbidden things and actions. [Mizan-al-Hikmat,v.3, p.63]*

Imam Hassan Askari (a) said the following about the very impressive value of the sincere ones:

If I reduced the whole world into a bite of food and fed it to the one who worships God out of sincerity, then I would still think I had not done right by him. [Ibid]

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8.2 Worksheet: Ikhlaas (sincerity)

1. _____ means to be sincere and honest in all respects.
2. It is possible to be sincere if we become aware of our _____ thoughts and ideas implanted in our minds by _____
3. If we keep our niyyat sincere we will be able to find _____.
4. Shaytan has made it his duty to _____ human being away from _____.
5. Allah has told us when we remember Him, He will also _____ us.
6. Write down one of Prophet Muhammad's (s) saying regarding sincerity.
7. Write down one of Imam Ali's (a) sayings regarding sincerity.

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8. Name five good deeds you could do to please Allah. How would you make sure you were sincere in those deeds?

9. What does FURQAN mean?

10. How can we achieve inner strength from Allah?

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Chapter 9: To Swallow Anger, to Forgive Others

Swallowing anger is similar to forbearance but refers specifically to when you have been wronged, and is one of the most commendable acts in Islam. What was introduced by Islam centuries ago is what is being taught today in all kinds of martial arts: the power to overcome one's anger or in other words, self –control.

There is a saying in English to "bury the hatchet" which means that instead of trying to get revenge just bury it and put it out of your mind. There is also another saying to "forgive and forget" which has a similar meaning.

This does not mean that you let people bully you and then you forgive them! It applies to those whom you have power over, or those who repent or have done the deed without intention.

Anger is a bitter pill to swallow, and is only managed with a strong will power. This can be seen by the following sayings of the Prophet (S),

> *"The strongest of you is he who overpowers himself when enraged and the most forbearing of you is the one who forgives when having overpowered his enemy."*

> *"Do you consider the intense strength as being in the lifting of (a heavy) stone whereas in fact it is in overpowering oneself when filled with anger".*

The way to swallow your anger is to "cool off".

> *"Verily anger is from Shaytan and the Shaytan is created from fire. And the fire is but extinguished with water. Therefore whenever one is overtaken with anger, he should make wudhu."*

Wudhu has a calming effect on the body, and cools it down. It also makes us remember Allah, so we gain control over our self again.

Imam Ali (A) has said that:

> *"Should any of you be faced with anger, he should sit down if standing; should lie down if sitting."*

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All of us have done sins at some time in our lives, something that might have been worthy of punishment. But if Allah can forgive us with his infinite mercy, then what right do we have to be angry at others when they are sorry?

> *Almighty Allah had said, **"Oh the son of Adam! Remember Me when in anger so that I remember you when you deserve my wrath and do not destroy you**."*

Also we are told in the Qur'an,

> ***3:133: Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous. Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; WHO RESTRAIN ANGER, AND PARDON (ALL) MEN; for God loves those who do good.***

Imam Musa al Kadhim (A) was given the title AL-KADHIM for this reason. He is the ideal example of one who swallowed his anger. He was treated despicably and imprisoned by oppressors right up to his martyrdom in prison, but he restrained his anger and bore it with patience.

Surah 42 Ayat 36 onwards explains

> ***"Whatever you are given (here) is (but) a convenience of this Life: but that which is with God is better and more lasting: (it is) for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord; those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds, and, WHEN THEY ARE ANGRY EVEN THEN FORGIVE;***
>
> ***Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance;***
>
> ***And those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (are not cowed but) help and defend themselves.***
>
> ***The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, His reward is due from God: for (God) does not love those who do wrong.***
>
> ***But indeed if any do help and defend themselves after a wrong (done) to them, against such there is no cause of blame."***

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9.1 Worksheet: To Forgive Others

1. Why should you forgive people?

2. Write down one hadith or one Qur'anic ayat regarding the act of swallowing anger.

3. What does it truly mean to forgive someone?

4. How does it make you a braver person (and also a more 'cool' person) when you forgive someone?

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5. Draw something that somebody could do to upset you but you could still forgive them:

E.g. your little sister throws all your favorite books off the shelf and your mom tells you off

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Chapter 10: Patience

Patience means to be able to wait quietly in times of difficulty and hardship. It also means to be tolerant. The Arabic word for patience is SABR.

Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) has said that

Patience is half of faith.

This means that if a person can stay patient even after hardship, then that person has taken a BIG step towards understanding their faith.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 153:

> ***"…Indeed Allah is with those who have Sabr." (2:153)***

In the above ayat we are told that if we have sabr (patience) then Allah is there with us, and we know that if Allah is with us then we have nothing to worry about.

Allah has also said in Qur'an Surah 2 Ayat 156-157

> ***"....and give glad tidings to the PATIENT ones who, when misfortune befalls them, say, "Verily we are God's and to Him shall we return." Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and His mercy; and they are the ones that are rightly guided."***

In English, there is a saying,

Patience is a virtue.

It means that it is an EXCELLENT QUALITY for a person to have patience.
In Qur'an Surah 103 ayat 23, Allah tells us:

"Verily mankind is in a loss,
except for those who believe,
teach the truth and have PATIENCE."

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The Holy Prophet (S) has said: Sabr is in three parts:

1) Sabr in times of hardship - when something goes wrong for you.

2) Sabr in regards to obedience - performing all the Wajibat correctly.

3) Sabr in regards to disobedience - not committing any Haraam acts

The perfect example of Sabr is the life of Prophet Ayyub (A). He was blessed with so much (health, children, wealth, land and sheep), then Shaytan asked Allah for power over Prophet Ayyub's (A) affairs saying that while Prophet Ayyub (A) had all these blessings he would remain grateful but if they were taken away then he would turn away from Allah.

Shaytan then destroyed all of Prophet Ayyub's (A) animals and property and worse of all; he killed his children as well. Then he caused Prophet Ayyub (A) to get a horrible disease, and his people forced him to leave his town.

Even with all this hardship Prophet Ayyub (A) remained faithful to Allah, praying and thanking Him for everything. Not only did he have Sabr but also Shukr (thankfulness).

The Holy Prophet (S) has said that faith is divided into two halves, one half is patience (Sabr) and the other half is thanksgiving (Shukr).

The above hadith tells us that to have true faith in Islam not only should we be patient but also thankful. So next time when something bad happens to you not only should you be patient but also thank Allah because Allah knows best.

Once a group of people came to our 4th Imam, Imam Ali Zainul Abideen (A) and said that they were his Shias.

Imam (A) asked them what they did when they got something nice. They replied we say "Alhamdulillah".

Imam (A) asked them what they did when something nice was taken away from them. They replied that they got upset then they would come to terms with it.

Imam (A) asked what they did if they did not get anything. They replied that they did nothing.

Imam (A) replied that these were not the actions of his Shia. These actions were the same as the actions of the dogs of Medina:

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When the dogs were given something they would wag their tails in Shukr (thanks).
When something was taken away from them they would bark a little (complaining) and then walk away.

When they got nothing they did nothing.

Imam (A) continued that Shia are those who say:

“Alhamdulillah” when they get something,

“Alhamdulillah” when something is taken away and

“Alhamdulillah” when they get nothing.

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10.1 Worksheet: Patience

Allah had given Prophet Ayyub (A) many blessings. He was a wealthy man with large flocks of sheep and a lot of land. He had many children and was well respected by his people.

PROPHET AYYUB (A)

1. What happened to all these blessings and why?

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What did Prophet Ayyub (A) do when faced with all this hardship?

_____
_____
_____
_____

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3. Suppose you had used all your Eid money to buy your favorite game and your younger sibling ***accidentally*** destroys it. You get really upset and start beating him/her up. Your feelings may be warranted, but how should your actions have been?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. If you do all the good deeds you can and try to be a good Muslim, but you realize there are many things your friends have that you don't, such as toys, video games, the latest computer, etc. should you feel that being a good Muslim is just not working for you? If not then how should you feel?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. What did Imam Ali say about the dogs of Medina? How can we make ourselves different than these dogs?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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Chapter 11: Hard Work

Islam encourages people to do hard work in their lives. Allah has given us life, not to waste but to work hard and achieve desired results. Those who do not work hard are actually being lazy and wasting the most valuable thing you have, time.

Hard work means to concentrate and strive at something until you achieve it.
You must have all heard the English saying,

If at first you don't succeed, than try and try and try again

Islam believes in working hard. If you work hard at something, than you will almost always succeed. Another common English saying is

It is better to have tried and failed than not to have tried at all.

A believer has to work harder than most people. This is because most people work only for this life, i.e. food, house, money, family etc...

However, the believer has to work for BOTH this life and the next life.

The way to work for the next life is to be fair in this life, to pray on time and to help those in need.

One of our Imams was once working very hard on a field. It was hot and sunny, and Imam was digging the ground.

A person passed by and saw Imam sweating and working away at the ground. He said to Imam, "Oh son of the Prophet, have you no shame?"

Imam looked up from his work and asked "Why, what have I done?"

The man answered, "You are working so hard for this world, and are forgetting your God."

Imam replied,
"Doing hard work which is halaal is one of the best forms of worship."

This shows that Islam is a religion which helps us lead a well balanced life. Its rules are not just on recitation and Salaat, but also on work and livelihood.

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11.1 Worksheet: Hard Work

1. Define the term ‘hard work’.

2. Why does a Muslim have to do double work?

3. Can working hard be the same as praying to Allah? Why or why not?

4. Explain what you think is the difference between hard work and laziness?

5. Describe how ***you*** do hard work in daily life.

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Chapter 12: Jealousy / Envy

There are three kinds of people in this world:

1) The first group of people do not pay much attention to the fact that someone is doing better than them or has more than them. They just carry on with their own lives.

2) The second group of people, who when they see other people doing well, themselves try harder to achieve success like their friends.

3) The third group of people is those who do not like to see others doing well and being happy. They wish that something bad happens to others. This way of thinking is called Jealousy and is hated by Allah.

Which group do you honestly think you are in?

.

Envy means to want the same as somebody else has. Another word for envy is coveted.
This is a bad habit too because it means that you are not satisfied with what Allah has given you.

In the Holy Qur'an (Surah 4, ayat 32) Allah says:

> ***"And do not <u>covet</u> those things which Allah has given as gifts more freely on some of you than on others; for men shall have of what they earn, and women will have of what they earn: But ask Allah for his bounty. For Allah has full knowledge over all things."***

Although jealousy and envy are often used together, there is a BIG difference between the two. Whereas envy means to crave someone else's position or property, jealousy (in its worst form) means not only to want something that someone else has, but at the same time not wanting him to have it either.

There once was a man who had a farm. His neighbour also had a farm. One day the man saw that his neighbour's cow was giving plenty of milk, and the milk was sweet and tasted excellent. The man did not like it and felt very angry that his neighbour should have such a good cow.

Then Shaytan came to the man and asked him what the problem was. The man pointed to the cow and said "Look what a wonderful cow my neighbour has." Shaytan replied, "Is that all, I will give you ten cows like that."

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The man answered "I don't want even one cow like that; I just don't want my neighbour to have it!"

This describes jealousy, which Allah hates because as He says in the Holy Qur'an Surah An Nisa:

"*Are they jealous of others because of what Allah has given them of His grace?"*(4:54)

By you being jealous of someone you are feeling bad that Allah has given that person something, and so really you are telling Allah that He has made a mistake and He should not have given that thing to that person. You are saying that you know more than Allah!

Jealousy hurts you most of all. It makes you unhappy, ungrateful and selfish.
The best example of how much damage jealousy can do we only have to look at what happened with the sons of Prophet Adam (A), Habil and Qabil:

One day, Prophet Adam (A) asked his sons Habil and Qabil to bring a gift for Allah, and whomever's gift was accepted by Allah would be the successor of Prophet Adam (A).

Habil who was a shepherd brought the best animal that he had to give to Allah. Qabil who was a farmer brought some spoilt corn as he thought to himself that Allah does not eat, so why should he take good corn.

Qabil did not realise that although it is true that Allah does not eat, Allah has told us that when you give a gift to anyone, give the best you can give.

Allah of course accepted Habil's gift, who had given the best he could. This made Qabil very jealous of Habil.

Qabil was so jealous that his brother was going to succeed his father that he killed his own brother.

Only after he had done such a bad thing did he stop to think and was very sorry for what he had done, but it was too late.

So you see when you are jealous you do not think and it serves no purpose. E.g. Qabil's killing of his brother still did not make him the successor of Prophet Adam (A).

Imam Ali (A) has said:

> *"Jealousy eats up good deeds like a fire consumes wood."*

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We know the way in which dry wood is burnt and consumed by a hot raging fire. That is what jealousy does to our deeds.

"A jealous person can never be a leader of men."

So if you have a jealous person for a leader then he will always be worried about himself and will never want anyone else to have anything good. A person like this could never do well for his followers.

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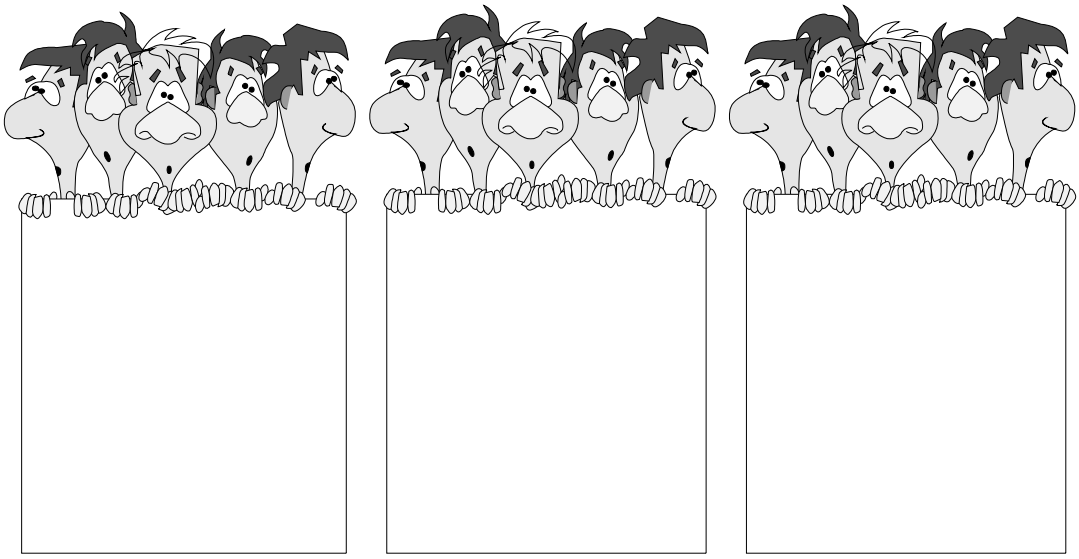
12.1 Worksheet: Jealousy/Envy

1. Write on the board the different groups of people there are and then tick the group you are in.



2. How can your being jealous of some one show your distrust in Allah?

3. Write down three ways jealousy can harm you.

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4. Write down what you may be envious of or jealous of when you see your friends. Don't feel shy, since many of us have these feelings. Talking about them and becoming aware of them is a first step towards helping yourself correct them and making you a happier person.

5. Learn the ayat below and write down its meaning:

Meaning of above ayat:

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Chapter 13: Mockery

"One group of people should not make fun of another group of people. May be they (the latter) are better than they (the former)".
(Surah al-Hujurat, 49:11.)

Some people make fun of others, and humiliate them in the eyes of their fellow-beings. People, who speak ill of others, are usually those whose education and upbringing have been somewhat lacking and who have not learnt proper social manners. They are perhaps not aware that all human beings are equal, and no one has the right to humiliate or hurt anyone. They also forget that it is quite possible, that those whom they ridicule may in fact be better people than themselves, because of other good qualities. It is the duty of every Muslim to respect others. If he observes any defect in the body, clothes, or house of another, he should not laugh at him or ridicule him. The Qur'an clearly states that there should not be any mocking among the believers:

"O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the (latter are better than the (former): Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong."
(Al-Hujraat 11)

Mockery is not only confined to laughing at someone after tricking him. It may even be in the form of a grin; or teasing with words; or looking into the eyes of another person to convey something 'funny' about another person. Such behaviors do not suit believers. The Qur'an tells us that such people will have the Fire of Allah mounted on their hearts.

"Woe to every (kind of) scandal-monger and-backbiter, who pileth up wealth and layeth it by, Thinking that his wealth would make him last for ever! By no means! He will be sure to be thrown into That which Breaks to Pieces, and what will explain to thee That which Breaks to Pieces? (It is) the Fire of (the Wrath of) Allah kindled (to a blaze), the which doth mount (Right) to the Hearts: It shall be made into a vault over them, in columns outstretched." (Al-Humaza 1-9)

It is not possible for a believer to behave in such a coarse manner after he knows this clear decree of Allah. Believers should seriously avoid from such manners. A believer may not be aware that he is in such a mood but, whenever he realizes that what he's doing is wrong, he should immediately stop and repent.

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13.1 Worksheet: Mockery

1. It is the duty of every Muslim to _____ others.

2. Some people make fun of others, and _____ them in the eyes of their fellow beings.

3. All human beings are _____, and no one has the right to humiliate or hurt anyone.

4. When we make fun of people we should realize they might actually be _____ than us.

5. Whenever we realize that our behavior is hurting other people we should immediately stop and _____.

6. People who engage in mocking others will have the _____ mounted on their hearts.

7. Why do you think peer pressure and a desire to feel “Cool” may lead to mockery?

8. In this country it is often considered cool if you can crack a joke about someone and laugh at them what would you do if someone in your class was very different than everybody else and all your friends constantly teased this person?]

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9. How can you stop yourself from making fun of other kids in your school or neighborhood?

10. Write down one of the above Qur'anic quotes on mockery in your own words.

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Chapter 14: Fault-finding

14.1 What is Fault-finding?

In Islam, fault-finding is considered to be an evil thing. Fault-finding is when you constantly try to find something wrong in other people. You're always trying to look for their defects. You try to find defects in the way they look, in the way they talk, in the way they think, and in the way they act. This can lead to discrimination against people. One form of discrimination is "racism" which means "judging a person on account of what color they are". The worst thing about fault-finding is that you never look at your own faults. Here is an example of fault-finding:

- *Mohsin was an average 18 year old boy. But he had one problem. He used to insult people too much. Once, when a friend was having a hard time trying to solve a Math problem, Mohsin said to him: "You're so dumb. Can't you even solve an easy Math problem?" Another time, when someone dropped a glass of water, Mohsin said to that person, "You're so clumsy; even my baby brother can hold a glass of water without dropping it." Every time someone made a mistake, Mohsin would be the one to notice it. Mohsin was proud of himself. He was not like those other people — or at least he thought he wasn't. Gradually, Mohsin lost friend after friend and he could do nothing about it.*

14.2 What are the Effects of Fault-finding?

As you saw in the example above, fault-finding can cause many bad effects. Here are some of them:

1. One thing that a fault-finder will do is insult others. This means that the fault-finder will never be able to carry out a good conversation with anyone and he will never be able to make friends either. He will create a feeling of hatred between people.

2. Also, fault-finding will make a person prouder than he was before. The fault-finder will not listen to anyone's advice because he will think he is superior to them. He will not be able to correct his own mistakes either.

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3. Finally, fault-finding harms the people who were insulted as well. Their feelings are hurt and they may feel insulted and upset.

14.3 What are the Consequences of Fault-finding?

Fault-finding can bring about many bad consequences:

1. We already mentioned one consequence and that is that people will start hating us if we always insult them and we will lose our friends.
2. Another consequence is that we may be punished by Allah. Fault-finding is an evil thing in Islam. Imam Ali (a) says: **"*The most evil of men is he who follows the faults of others but is blind to his own faults*."** Also, Allah warns us in the Qur'an: **"*Jahannam is promised for every fault-finder*." (Holy Qur'an, 104: 1).**

14.4 What are the Cures to Prevent Us from Fault-finding?

Fortunately, there are cures to solve this problem, but it is up to us to make sure that we follow them. As long as we take the first step, Allah will help us the rest of the way.

1. The first thing we should do is to look at our own faults. Imam Ali (a) says*: "Blessed is he, whose own faults occupy him from the faults of others*." So we should look at our own faults and try to change them if we can. Every night, before going to sleep, we should think about what we did during the day and see if we did anything bad. If we did, then we should remember not to do it again. This way, we will be able to correct our mistakes before anyone else can find them. Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (a) says: "*The most beneficial thing for a man is to recognize his own faults before others do so*."
2. The second thing to do is to realize that it is normal for people to make mistakes. Imam Ali (a) says: "*Whoever sees his own faults will stop seeing the faults of others*." The reason he said this is because, if we look at our own faults, then we will realize that we are not perfect so we will tend to be more tolerant of others.
3. The third thing to do is to realize that the act of fault-finding is a fault itself. It is something bad that must be changed. If we understand that it's a fault, then we will not do it that often.
4. Finally, instead of looking for faults in people, we should try to look for good things in them. We should respect people for who they are. We should remember that we are all brothers and sisters of each other and that Allah is our Creator. Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (a) was once asked: "Yabna Rasullilah! What are the conditions of good behavior?" Imam replied, "being kind and gentle, ***speaking only the best***, and meeting Mumineen with a cheerful face"

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In Suratul Bani Israil 17:53t the Qur'an also says:

" *And say (O Muhammad) to Our servants that they should speak which is best*…."

In conclusion, since fault-finding is so undesirable we should do all that we can to prevent ourselves from falling into this evil act!

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14.5 Worksheet: Fault-Finding

1. Fault-finding is when you constantly look for _____ in other people.

2. According to the Qur'an, _____ is promised for every fault-finder.

3. The first thing to do to prevent yourself from fault –finding is to _____

   _____.

4. Name two other things that can help you prevent yourself from finding faults in others.

5. Think about one or two faults you have and how you would feel if other people always looked at those faults. Write down the faults you just thought of. If you think you have no faults make up some you could have.

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Chapter 15: Gheebat (Backbiting)

Backbiting means to talk about a person, and say things about him when he is not there, in such a way as to displease him.

There are two words for backbiting, one is GHEEBAT, and the other is TOHMAT.

When you speak about someone, and what you say is TRUE, then this is GHEEBAT.

When you speak about someone, and what you say is FALSE, then this is TOHMAT.

GHEEBAT AND TOHMAT ARE BOTH HARAAM (FORBIDDEN)

The Holy Prophet (S) once said,

> *"O Abu Dharr, keep yourself away from backbiting because it is worse than adultery..... After committing adultery, if one repents, Allah forgives him, but the backbiter can not be pardoned unless he has been pardoned by the one about whom he has been backbiting."*

If you heard someone swear, and you told all your friends when that person was not there, then that is Gheebat.

In Surah Humazah (The Slanderer) Allah mentions:

> ***"Woe to every slanderer, defamer, who amasses wealth and considers it a provision (against mishap); he thinks that his wealth will make him immortal. Nay! He shall most certainly be hurled into the crushing disaster; and what will make you realize what the crushing disaster is? It is fire kindled by Allah, which rises above the hearts. Surely it shall be closed over upon them, in extended columns."***

In the 49th surah of the Qur'an Surah Hujurat, ayat 12, Allah also tells us:

> ***"....And do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the dead flesh of his brother?"***

This shows us that backbiting is as bad as eating the flesh of your dead brother. This means that once someone you know, that is your brother/sister in Islam has done something bad; they have killed their own reputation. By telling others what they have done, you are enjoying and gaining at their loss. It is as if you are eating and feasting on the reputation they have already destroyed.

In the early days of the first few Imams, there were two men. Let us call the first one

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Haroon and the second one Khalid.

One day Khalid started telling everybody bad things about Haroon. He was spreading lies all around. After a few days Haroon heard about this. The first thing he did was to go home and put all his money and gold and silver in a big bag and then took the bag to Khalid's house.

When Khalid saw Haroon coming he became scared because he thought that Haroon had come to beat him up. Khalid came out of his house and fell on his knees and begged to Haroon, "O Haroon, I am really sorry, I did not mean to tell tales about you, Oh please do not beat me!!"

Haroon said, "I have not come to beat you, I have come to give you this money, and this wealth."

Khalid was shocked at this behavior.

Haroon continued, "Khalid, I have come to thank you, here have this wealth of mine."

Khalid stood up and asked, "Why are you giving me wealth when I have insulted you and spoilt your name among the people?"

Haroon replied. "The Holy Prophet (S) has said that if one person TALKS BEHIND THE BACK of another, the thawaab of the first person gets transferred to the second. So now that you have spoken bad of me behind my back, I am thanking you for giving me all your thawaab. This money is too little for the amount of thawaab that you have given me."

This shows how Gheebat and tohmat can erase good deeds off from someone’s records.

Let us look at another example. Once there was a man who did tohmat of our Sixth Imam.

Imam did no know about it until a few days later when one of his `friends' came to him and said, "Oh Imam, I have heard terrible news. This person has been going around and saying this about you."

Imam became angry at his `friend'. He said, "Think of the person who did tohmat towards me as if he shot an arrow at my body. I did not hear him so it is as if the arrow missed me; but by telling me this news, you have picked up the arrow from the ground and have hit me with it."

It is the duty of a good Muslim to stop others from speaking ill of a person, and if that is not possible he should go away from the people who are talking ill.

Why are gheebat and tohmat haraam?

They are haraam because they spoil people’s names and characters. When you speak badly of someone, you make others think badly of them.

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Another reason why it is bad is because the people are not there to defend themselves. If you hear wicked things about others, you should give the others a chance to defend themselves by explaining, before you believe what you hear.

Sayings of Imam Ali (a) regarding Gheebat:

1. _____

   "*Gheebat is the diet for the dogs of Jahannam (hell)*

2. _____

   "*Gheebat is the act of a weak and low person"*

3. _____

   "*Gheebat is the sign of a Munafiq"*

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15.1 Worksheet: Gheebat

Fill in the blanks

1. Backbiting means to talk about a person when he is not there, in such a way as to _____him.

2. When you speak about someone, and what you say is TRUE, then this is _____; and if what you say is FALSE then it is _____.

3. Both Gheebat and tohmat are _____.

4. According to the Surah _____ a slanderer or person that commits gheebat/tohmat will not be able to save himself with his wealth.

5. Surah Hujurat compares Gheebat and tohmat to eating the _____ of one's dead _____.

6. Gheebat and tohmat are haraam because they spoil people's _____ and _____.

7. Another reason Gheebat and tohmat are wrong is because the people are not there to _____ themselves.

Answer these questions in complete sentences:

8. If Sara tells her friend Maryam that Anum (another friend) has been spreading lies about Maryam, do you think she is doing a good thing and being nice to Maryam? Why or why not?

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9. Suppose Zaid and Hisham are sitting next to each other in an exam. Their classmate Hassan notices Zaid peeking at Hisham's answers and writing them down. He goes over to Hisham after the exam and tells him that Zaid was cheating off of him. Do you think he did the right thing? Why? What should he have done?

10. Think of two ways of doing Gheebat and write them down. Use examples different than the ones mentioned in this lesson. Next time you are tempted to do any of these things remind yourself of Surah Humazah, Surah Hujurat, and Imam Ali's (a) sayings; you'll realize how small you are being!

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Chapter 16: Consideration of Under-privileged People

Under-privileged people are those people who are not as well off as we are. This does not only mean wealth and clothes, it also means people who have physical and/or mental problems.

Allah has made everybody for a special reason. He has made some people big, some small, some white, some black, some healthy, some sick.... all different types. If we are lucky enough to be perfectly healthy, we should not be proud because our body was not made by us. It has been made by Allah and so we should thank Allah.

The Prophet (S) has said:

"All of you are from Adam, and Adam was from dust."

We should remember that we are made only from dust and are privileged if our body is healthy. However if our body is not perfect, we should still not complain because there are many other people with even more problems than ourselves.

We should **ALWAYS HELP** those people who are not as fortunate as ourselves in whatever way we can, and **NEVER EVER** tease them. If we do this, we are being considerate, if not than we are being very unkind and thoughtless. The secret of being considerate is to pretend you were the other person, and try to see how life would be through his/her eyes.

At the end of the day, it is not good enough just thinking about the under-privileged, we should DO something to help them. There are many different ways of helping people. If a person is poor, we could help them by giving them some financial help. Perhaps we could help pay for someone's education or help provide food to a family that needed that kind of help.

There are people in need of other kinds of help; some are disabled in some way. They might not be able to do things as easily as we can. They don't need money, but they need friendship and consideration. We should not laugh at these people, or make fun of them, but should go out of our way to be friendly with them and to make them feel that they are one of us, and not different.

Then there are people who are not very sure of themselves, and make mistakes often. Instead of laughing at them, we should help them and encourage them. When they make a mistake, instead of teasing them, we could tell them how to improve. It could be that all they need are some true friends to help them.

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In conclusion, there are different ways we should help people. We should donate money whenever possible to those that are less privileged in wealth. We should try to help people that are sick and could use our help. We could help educate someone that needed education. Sometimes just a word of kindness can help an unhappy person feel good. If you start thinking, the possibilities of helping those in need, are endless.

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16.1 Worksheet: Consideration of Under-privileged People

Answer the following questions:

1. Why should we always help those people who are not as fortunate as ourselves?

2. There are different ways of helping people, what are some ways you can help people less fortunate than yourself?

3. Suppose you have a new student in class who has just arrived from Korea. His English is extremely bad and nobody can understand his accent. When he speaks in class most people giggle and make fun of him. What are 2 or 3 things you can do to help this classmate?

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4. Suppose you are very good at computers but your little nine year old brother has a lot of trouble with it. One day your brother is struggling with his homework on the computer and you are in the middle of your favorite video game. Would it be consideration on your part if you leave your game; tell your brother how dumb he is; but do his homework for him? Or would it be nobler of you to stop your game for a while; explain to your brother in detail how to do his work on the computer and let him do it by himself; then go back to your game? Why?

5. Which do you think is a *better* gesture (they could both be good): saying a few kind words to a devastated friend who has lost his favorite video game or giving your best friend a piece of extra candy that you have? Why?

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Chapter 17: Rights of Relatives

A family is a group of people with a special connection binding them. This connection can be by blood, or in some other ways. No matter how badly our family treats us, or how difficult they are to please, we should always keep the family united, and maintain contact with our relatives. Sometimes it may be difficult to tolerate abuse, or insult from those who are close to you, but if you return kindness to those who are mean, then you will show yourself to be higher and Allah will reward you for your example, which they should follow.

> ***16:90: God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to KITH and KIN, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that you may receive admonition.***

Remember our 4th Imam's (A) prayer, in Sahifa e Kamila,

"Oh Allah, give me the grace to act with sincerity to those who were insincere to me."

It is your duty to keep with your family, even if they are in the wrong. Do not let pride, or politics enter your thinking. Act in the way Allah would like best, and all will be well.

Be kind to your relatives; help them economically; physically; and morally; regularly visit them; write to them; or do whatever you can possibly do for them.

Here are some excerpts from Imam Zainul Abideen's (a) Risalatul Huquq regarding the rights of different relatives:

Rights of the mother:
It is the right of the mother that you should appreciate that she carried you as nobody carries you, and fed you, and protected you…..And remember that her whole existence was your protection…
Therefore, you must remain thankful to her accordingly…

Rights of the father:
It is the right of your father to realize that he is your root and you are his branch; … therefore whenever you find in yourself anything likeable, remember your father is the basic means of that gift [of Allah] to you. And be thankful to Allah and grateful to your father accordingly.

Rights of the child:
It is the right of your child to know that he is from you and, with all his virtue and vice, is

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connected to you in this world, and you are responsible for instructing him in good manners, guiding him towards his Lord, helping him follow His commands which concern you or him; and you will be rewarded or punished [according to your success or failure in this guidance]

Rights of the brother;
It is the right of your brother to appreciate that he is your hand which you extend, and your back [support] which you recline upon, and your strength which you rely on, and your power by which you attack [your enemies]…do not shirk from assisting him against his own self [i.e. warning him to desist from evils]..and giving him sincere advice and going forward to him for the sake of Allah…

Rights of the spouse:
It is incumbent upon both of you to thank Allah for your partner and to know that (the spouse) is a grace of Allah upon you. And it is obligatory to have good fellowship with this grace of Allah (your wife), and to respect her and be kind to her…..

The specific examples above give us an insight into the rights of individual people. There is one more group of people we should look at, our elders (not necessarily only parents). Respect to your elders is also a very important concept. Elders are not just old people, but people who have done their share for the community. They have worked hard and it is thanks to them that we have all the things around us today! Is it fair that when they are too old to work, that we should forget them and send them away to old people's homes like other cultures do?

We must not only respect our elders, but thank them and listen to their advice. No matter how much we know, our elders have had experience, and Imam Ali (A) has said,

"What is better than knowledge is experience."

Allah tells us that the best ornaments of a community are its elderly people. They are the cause of so many blessings that if the younger people knew how much Allah loves the elderly, they would never leave them alone for even a moment.

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17.1 Worksheet: Rights of Relatives

Answer the following questions:

1. Write down the dua' of Imam Zainul Abideen (a) in Sahifa e Kamila and tell what you think it means.

2. Explain in your own words how you should behave towards your father.

3. What is the responsibility of your parents towards you?

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4. Suppose your brother makes friend with this ‘cool guy’ in school. This new friend of his thinks it is ‘cool’ to use bad language and swear at others. Your brother starts to take after him and begins to use this kind of language. What is your responsibility towards your brother?

5. If your six year old brother needs to read every day to improve his language grades and he expects that you will support and help him by listening to him read every day, is he entitled to expect this out of you? Why or why not?

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Chapter 18: Respect and Rights of Neighbors

Respect to Neighbors does not necessarily mean only those people living next door, but all the people in the area close around you. We should have consideration towards our neighbors and try not to do things which will cause inconvenience to them. We should also help them in all ways i.e. sacrificing time and if need be, helping them financially.

Prophet Muhammad (S) was so polite to his neighbors and did so many things for them that the Muslims of the time were worried that it would become wajib upon them to include the neighbors in their will (Inheritance)!

In Imam Zainul Abideen's (a) RISALATUL HUQUQ he has given us a list of rights of neighbors:

1. You must protect everything about him/her when he/she is present.
2. He/she must be respected when present.
3. You must help him/her when absent.
4. Do not look for bad things about him/her.
5. If you find out something bad about him/her, cover his/her fault like a strong fort not letting anyone see it.
6. Do not sneakily listen to his/her conversations.
7. When he/she is in trouble do not leave him/her.
8. When he/she is well off and happy do not be jealous.
9. Forgive his/her faults.
10. If he/she does not behave well with you, be patient.
11. Be his/her shield if anyone wants to abuse him/her.
12. If you know that he/she will listen to your advice then advise him/her secretly and not in front of all.

Let us look at the following example of consideration towards neighbors: There was once a great Mujtahid. He was having dinner one day when a messenger from his teacher knocked at his door and said,

"Your teacher has sent for you immediately. He refuses to eat his dinner until he sees you"

The mujtahid left his dinner and quickly rushed to his teacher's house. When he entered the house his teacher who looked very upset, said to him:

"It is now a whole week that your neighbor and his family are without food. Your neighbor asked a grocer for some dates saying they would pay him when they had the money but the

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grocer would not agree. Your neighbor returned empty handed without any food for his family. How could you not be aware of his problems? Take food for him and sit with him to eat so he does not feel shy, and take this money for him and put it under a cushion or rug so he does not feel embarrassed. When you have done this let me know for I will not eat until then."

This shows that not only is it important to know if your neighbors need help, but to help them in such a subtle manner that saves them from embarrassment. In this country it is hard to get to know your neighbors but perhaps small gestures can sometimes show kindness. One way in which we can respect our neighbors is by sending them some special treats when we have our celebrations, such as Eid ul Fitr. In this way, we can show them that Islam is a peaceful religion, and Muslims are friendly.

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18.1 Worksheet: Rights of Neighbors

Answer the following questions:

1. Write down and explain five of the rights of neighbors mentioned in our fourth Imam's Rislatul Huquq.

2. Write down one way you can be nice to your neighbor. Use an example other than the ones mentioned above.

3. Suppose you and your neighborhood children get out in the evenings to play basketball every day. One day you find out there is a new child in the block but you don't know where this child is from or even if he is friendly. With your parents' permission what should you do to ensure your neighbor's rights are being met?

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4. Suppose your next door neighbor is sick and cannot get out of bed for the next 10 days. Write down ways you could you help this neighbor (without jeopardizing your own safety of course)

5. Suppose you have a barbeque in your house on a Sunday night and your friends are playing in your yard. The lights are on, the grown ups are sitting and talking. Nobody is in a rush since it is summer vacations. So all of you are yelling and running even though it is quite late at night (11:00 p.m.). What is the right of your neighbor next door that you are ignoring? What can you do differently so that his rights are met?

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